General Audiences

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Gen

Project Hail Mary - Andy Weir
Project Hail Mary (2026)

Ryland Grace & Rocky

Ryland Grace
Rocky (Project Hail Mary)

Sleep
Platonic Cuddling
Ryland Grace & Rocky are Best Friends
Fluff
Journey to Erid (Project Hail Mary)
Ryland Grace Needs a Hug
And he's getting many!

zero hour, 9am

Likelightinglass

Summary:

Grace sleeps, and dreams.

Rocky watches, and contemplates.

Notes:

Okay so all of these are going to be titled with lines from Rocket Man by Elton John, I guess, until I run out of lyrics and/or they stop making sense.

A short interstitial of Rocky POV! Otherwise how would we know for sure how cute Dr Ryland Grace looks when he's sleeping.

Enjoy!

(See the end of the work for more notes (#work_endnotes) and other works inspired by this one (#children) .)

I stop the motion of my fingers through Grace's hair shortly after I hear his breathing slow and even out.

"Grace is asleep, question?" I say quietly. I learned the hard way that speaking too loudly just wakes him up. I am not in the mood for a grumpy human, and Grace needs his sleep.

No response.

I began to slowly move and back away. I was still going to observe within the dormitory, of course. But I was working on an improvement to my optic readout scanner, a large one to permanently install in the ship's control room so I could read the screens while keeping all my hands free, and was hoping to get to work on it for the next few hours in peace while Grace slept.

He stirred very slightly, an arm moved up and pressed through the membrane to land against my carapace with a thunk. He's still asleep. I laughed softly, gently pushed back and guided his hand back to the bed, then began to walk towards my work.

We weren't more than a few seconds parted when I heard him let out a low octave, soft, sad hum.

I immediately settled back down beside him and took hold of his hand. Looks like I wasn't going anywhere.

Human sleep was still a bizarre thing to observe, but fascinating. When Grace first explained it to me, it seemed convenient that a person could be easily awoken if there was danger. However, upon observation I decided it's an incredibly inefficient use of energy to be moving around and hallucinating for several hours instead of true Eridian sleep. How could the mind and body possibly repair itself during rest if there looked to be nothing restful about it?

He has been sleeping much better recently though, more soundly and for longer periods. The introduction of physical affection back in his life is the causation that makes the most sense. I'm sad to think he never told me earlier that this was something humans would get unhappy without. He could have just used our agreement of “culture rule” in the early days and I'd have figured something out to allow me to provide it.

He agreed to watch me sleep the very first time I asked. And he didn't even know at the time how valuable that was. The comfort and safety he gifted me after so many years of being alone. Learning how to pet a human would be a small price to pay to return the favor.

I'd have done it even before I loved him. Now that I do, it's like a calling.

He mumbles something, but it's impossible to work out what he's saying.

I wonder if this is going to be a chatty sleep cycle. I haven't told him that he talks in his sleep sometimes. I tried telling myself it's because I think that might be a rude thing to bring up since it might embarrass him, but really it's because I enjoy these little moments where it's just me and sleeping Grace. And I want to keep them to myself.

I decide to go back to thinking about his home on Erid while I observe him shift and then settle again, saying a few words I don't recognize.

Grace and I have and will continue to discuss his obvious needs. He of course knows I will need to prepare him a place to live with breathable air, proper illumination, and a comfortable temperature. Liquid water to replace all his constant leaking. He will need duplication of his “coma slurry” to provide the nutrition and calories his body requires. This will be in the books I show him so he can confirm accuracy and we can get him a habitable environment as soon as possible.

But when I imagine caring for not only the savior of Erid, but my very best friend, that is not nearly enough.

For my Grace, survival is insufficient.

I put my hand on his back and begin tracing out numbers for the necessary acreage and volume of the habitat, and what supplies will be necessary. Even though his skin is so sensitive, he hasn't seemed to realize that I'm often doing mathematical equations on the long expanse of his back. He's only commented that he enjoys it. So, “two birds, one stone” as the human expression goes.

He will need a very large space. I will attach my (and Adrian's, if they still want me) home to the outside of is habitable area, and build in human safe spaces there like I have in his ship. But he will never be able to experience being “outside” in the way he could on Earth, so I need to figure out a way to give it to him. I think about all the different biomes of Earth he's shown me. Could we recreate one with Erid materials? I have no means of creating trees for him other than sculptures. We could probably simulate one of Earth's deserts, but he's never shown much interest in those to me. Based on the composition of his planet, the average location would be an ocean.

I could make him a beach.

I tap to hear him better. He is so peaceful sometimes when sleeping. None of the scrunching folds on his upper face that get pronounced when he's worried or concentrating are there, just relaxed smoothness. The steady tap of his heartbeat and even the inflation and deflation of air pushed through his lungs has a comforting repetition to it. It's soothing to hear him move with life.

He's deeply asleep now, I can tell because he's let go of my hand. So I chance speaking softly.

“Would you like an ocean in your home, question?” I ask. “You could walk along the beach everyday. I will find a way to make your sky look different throughout the day, I can't perceive the colors you can but I want you to find it beautiful. I will study sunrises and sunsets so I can show you the star you saved.”

He doesn’t respond, I didn't expect him to, but maybe a part of him hears me.

I hope I've influenced his unconscious mind to dream of home.

Notes:

I am soliciting ideas for anything you'd like to see in this series, particularly specific non sexual but intimate physical acts you'd like to see described. I can't make any promises but if I'm able I will write it!

Series this work belongs to:

- ← Previous Work (http://archiveofourown.org/works/81767131) Part 3 of Platonic cuddling (http://archiveofourown.org/series/5891781) Next Work → (http://archiveofourown.org/works/82340846)

Works inspired by this one:

- [Podfic] zero hour, 9am (https://archiveofourown.org/works/83627396) by Flowerparrish Pods (Flowerparrish) (http://archiveofourown.org/users/Flowerparrish/pseuds/Flowerparrish%20Pods)

Close (#)